

Family Viewing Guide

Character and Life Skills: Tolerance

Grade Level: 3-5

The Facts

In 2013, the organization ACCEPT PLURALISM published their toolkit for measuring tolerance in communities. They offer three levels of scoring:

- **low** = cultural, ethnic and religious minority and immigrant needs are ignored, no accommodation. Minorities/immigrants and their deviation from 'normal' practice are stigmatized and/or outlawed. Minorities/immigrants are excluded from participating fully in aspects of social life.
- **medium** = promotes minimal tolerance of diversity and limited opportunities for minority inclusion. Individual and group difference is allowed to exist within the public space but no special measures are taken towards their accommodation and inclusion.
- **high** = promotes positive acceptance/accommodation of diversity, not only makes room but also offers arrangements for recognizing the needs of minority or immigrant pupils; ensures equality and decent treatment; respects minority choices and ensures participation.

Start a Conversation with Your Kids

1. What does tolerance mean to you?
2. What is something you find difficult to "tolerate"? Why?
3. How do you think we score according to the tolerance scale?
4. How can we improve our tolerance?
5. Why is it important to respect others, even if they are different from us?

Advice from the Experts

Everyday Family gives the following advice to parents about teaching tolerance:

1. **Teach them love first.** Be an example of loving others despite and because of their differences. Seek to help others, even if they are different than you.
2. **Know your own values and biases.** No one is without biases or values of their own. It is important to evaluate our own personal beliefs, values, and differences we struggle to tolerate. Seek to understand those things more completely.
3. **Expose children to differences.** Teach them they don't have to agree to respect others. This can allow a child to see your appreciation and respect for others while still allowing you to express your own views, values, and culture. It is important to note that it is not necessary to agree with or adopt all the differences we come to understand, but that we can always respect others for holding those values.
4. **Challenge stereotypes.** It is important not to participate in jokes or other practices that foster stereotypes and degrade others. If we encounter such intolerance, parents can assertively tell their children, "That's not true. Why don't we learn a little more about that to better understand what is true."
5. **Foster your child's self-esteem.** When children feel good about themselves, they don't feel threatened by the differences of others. Children who are secure about themselves are more comfortable exploring and debating opposing views.